

ADDRESS

OF

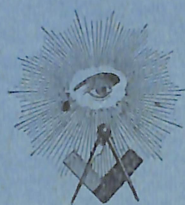
M. W. CHAS. C. CLARK,

GRAND MASTER,

BEFORE THE GRAND LODGE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

A. F. & A. M.

ANNUAL COMMUNICATION, DECEMBER 4TH, 1871.



RALEIGH:

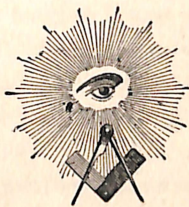
NICHOLS & GORMAN, BOOK & JOB PRINTERS,  
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BRETHREN:—Let us, as Masons, who are taught to exercise “a faithful reliance on Divine Providence,” return thanks to Almighty God, for the mercies of the past year, and invoke His counsel and guidance in our present deliberations, that our acts may tend to the promotion of His honor and a thorough dissemination of the most excellent tenets of our Institution.

In assuming the duties and responsibilities of the exalted station to

### ERRATA.

On page 6, last line, 6th word read *its* for *it*.

“ “ 11, 26th “ 8th “ “ intelligent.

“ “ 12, 1st “ 1st “ “ born for berne.

“ “ 14, 8th “ 4th “ “ occupant for occupants.

“ “ 14, 9th “ 9th “ “ *their* for *the*.

lished for the government of His intelligent creatures, to lead her votaries “to pay that rational homage to the Deity, which at once constitutes their duty and their happiness.”

It should be, and doubtless is, a cause for self-congratulation, that the Grand Lodge of North Carolina has, at all times, and under all circumstances, recognized this mission of Masonry; and, by word and deed, endeavored to constrain the individual Mason to be true and faithful in his allegiance, and “to live and act agreeably to his profession.” No corrupting habit, no debasing immorality, no polluting vice, has here received aught but the severest condemnation—while Subordinate Lodges have been exhorted and required to vindicate the character of our moral institution, by a prompt and thorough expurgation of moral offences, either by reforming the offender, through good counsel and timely admonition, or by cutting him off, as a diseased limb, that would destroy the vigor and ruin the health of the whole body. And hence it is, that the arch enemies to all social peace and personal purity—Profanity and Drunkenness—have been boldly and determinedly assailed by





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In assuming the duties and responsibilities of the exalted station to which your kindness and partiality had called me, I trust that I somewhat appreciated the truth, that the Institution of Masonry was not designed solely to heighten the pleasures of social intercourse, or to connect men together, by indissoluble ties, which would render them, in certain selfish senses, stronger and more independent within themselves; but that, far above and beyond these lesser things, the true mission of Masonry was to elevate the thoughts, to cultivate the heart, to ennoble the character, to beautify and adorn human nature to the fullest extent of human capability—and thus, by interweaving and harmoniously blending her own moral teachings with the holy principles, which God has established for the government of His intelligent creatures, to lead her votaries “to pay that rational homage to the Deity, which at once constitutes their duty and their happiness.”

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the resolutions of '68, which proclaim to the world the true spirit and genius of Masonry, in the enactment—

1st. That profanity and drunkenness are among the highest Masonic crimes.

2nd. That Subordinate Lodges in this jurisdiction, are directed to vindicate the law in relation thereto.

It would certainly be a work of supererogation to attempt to prove, that these resolutions are in perfect accordance with every Masonic precept and doctrine. They do not make acts offences, which before were not offences. They are simply declaratory of the law. The Mason is taught, even at his Masonic birth, never to mention God's name, "but with that reverential awe which is due from a creature to his Creator;" and always to subject the appetites and passions to that due restraint, "which renders the body tame and governable, and frees the mind from the allurements of vice." The fact is, the *moral* law is the *Masonic* law; and he who violates the one, violates the other. Hence, the most eminent masonic jurists, submitting themselves to the guidance of the Masonic ritual and charges, assert, without hesitation or compromise, that every transgression of the moral law, is an offence against the masonic law. And, therefore, the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, with a fidelity to the laws and principles of the Institution which should provoke emulation in all other jurisdictions, declares, that Profanity and Drunkenness, being among the *most flagrant* violations of the moral law, are among the *highest* masonic crimes. It would indeed be strange were it otherwise—and who would have it otherwise, if they could!

Profanity and drunkenness should surely come within the prohibition of masonic authority, since they offend against every rule of gentlemanly propriety and decorum—and to be a *mason* certainly cannot mean not to be a *gentleman*. Habits which deaden the moral sensibility, blunt the moral perception, and debauch all the moral faculties, should be forced to yield unconditionally to the mandate of an Institution, which teaches the HOLY BIBLE to be the rule and guide of faith, and that all actions should be squared by the "SQUARE OF MORALITY."

The only real power that Masonry has, is her grand moral power. Take this from her and Masonry becomes a huge imposition—a sublime fraud—a magnificent cheat—a splendid statue, cold and lifeless—a galvanized corpse—in fine, Masonry ceases to be Masonry. Herein lies the true secret of her success. It is this which has erected



around her altars a fortress of defence, that neither "the lapse of time, the ruthless hand of ignorance, the devastations of war, nor the unsparing ravages of barbarous force," could capture and destroy. Her triumphs and achievements are to-day, as they have been from the "time immemorial" of her existence, commensurate with the exercise of this mighty energy, which controls the will, subdues the passions, and regulates the life. If we give up this, we give up all. If this be preserved, the most excellent tenets of our Institution which have been transmitted to us through the successive ages of the past, will be transmitted through the succeeding ages of the future, and "symbolic emblems, most expressive," will continue "to imprint on the mind wise and serious truths," which shall be beautifully exemplified in lives of moral greatness, of virtuous friendship, of true heroism.

From information which I have obtained, by means of a circular letter, addressed to the Subordinate Lodges, early in my official term, I make known to you the humiliating fact, that, within the jurisdiction of the 103 Lodges, which responded to my inquiries, about five hundred Masons are addicted to habitual profanity, and about three hundred and twenty-five to the excessive use of intoxicating drinks. There are in the State, about two hundred and twenty-five working Lodges, and between ten and eleven thousand Masons. We may, therefore, fairly conclude, that at least one thousand Masons in the State, daily profane God's name, while seven hundred, at least, walk daily with their brains addled by the intemperate use of alcoholic stimulants. What a foul blot upon Masonry's escutcheon!

Brethren, I submit this mortifying statement to you with the earnest recommendation, that you will take such steps, as to your wisdom may seem meet and proper, to do away with this crying shame, this terrible evil. As in operative masonry, "the corners of rough stones are broken off, the better to fit them for the builder's use;" so we, in speculative masonry, profess to be engaged in the noble undertaking of "divesting the heart and conscience of all the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting the mind as a living stone for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Let me conjure you to be true to your profession. Let these offenders against the moral-masonic law be reformed, if possible, by those gentle, persuasive means which readily suggest themselves to the intelligent Mason: yet, if this cannot



be done, let them be thrown away as "rubbish," that the beauty of the temple may not be marred, nor its strength diminished.

It would be well, brethren, to make it *expressly* obligatory on your Grand Master, to require Subordinate Lodges, under such penalties as may receive your prior sanction, to inaugurate prompt and decisive measures for the removal of these masonic stumbling-blocks, [which so hinder and retard our pace to the full development of the higher and nobler qualities of our nature. I make the suggestion, that the Grand Master may, in the discharge of this imperative duty, be clearly and unmistakably supported by the authority of the Grand Lodge, which many Masons—and some very prominent ones too—would hold *in terrorem* over the Grand Master's head, when his acts do not conform to their preconceived notions of what a Grand Master should, or should not do.

And now, brethren, before I pass on, let me earnestly beseech you to put the inherent moral power of Masonry in the liveliest exercise. It is the very *soul* of the Institution. Upon it depends everything—the success of the present, the hopes of the future. A profane Mason is a palpable contradiction. A drunken Mason is a vile slander upon our cherished Institution. Let us see to it, that he, who wears the Lamb-skin, the emblem of innocence, shall not bedaub its spotless folds with the filth of the mouth, or the mud of the gutter; but that he shall preserve it, pure and without spot, the badge of a mason who reverences his God, and, unlike the brute, gives not the loose reins to the low propensities of his nature.

In 1862, the Grand Lodge adopted the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That every Mason ought to belong to some particular Lodge, and comply with its By-Laws and the general regulations in relation to the payment of dues and contributions to the Charity Funds. And any Mason, who does not contribute to the funds, or belong to some Lodge, is not entitled to visit a Lodge while he remains non-affiliated, or to join in processions, or to relief, or masonic assistance, or burial.

A critical analysis of this resolution, will furnish two propositions:

- 1st. Every Mason ought to belong to a Lodge.
- 2d. Every Mason who does not belong to a Lodge, must be punished—or, as the resolution itself has it, "shall not be entitled to visit a Lodge or to join in procession, or to relief, or masonic assistance, or burial.

In the judgment, therefore, of the Grand Lodge, a non-affiliated Mason (I use this phrase in its common acceptation) lives in the continuous per-



petration of a crime against the Institution of which he is a dishonored member. If this be untrue, whence does the Grand Lodge derive the power to inflict upon him the severest penalties known to the law for his non-affiliation? It certainly cannot punish the *innocent*; and, with equal certainty, can only punish the *guilty*. But guilt pre-supposes a violated law. Therefore, the Grand Lodge admits, that a Mason, who puts himself in the condition styled, in modern phraseology, non-affiliated, violates a law. Or, to be a little more explicit, a Mason who applies to a Lodge for a dimit, with the intent of becoming non-affiliated, proposes to commit a crime against the Lodge to which he applies, as well as against the institution, in general, of which that Lodge is a constituent part. And the Lodge itself, if it grant the application, becomes *particeps criminis*; for how else can the criminal intent be coupled with the overt act, unless the Lodge becomes an aider and abettor, by granting the application? Can it be possible that the ethical rules of masonry are so unlike the recognized and well defined rules in all other systems of ethics, that a Mason has the *right* to commit a crime? Yea, that his Lodge has the *right* to aid and abet him in its commission? If a Mason, then, has not the *right* to commit a *crime*, can he possibly have the *right* to become non-affiliated, which the Grand Lodge declares to be a *crime*, by inflicting upon the non-affiliate the severest penalties known to the laws? And can his lodge have the *right* to become his partner in crime, by granting the dimit, which is the finishing stroke to the crime, and without which the crime itself could not be committed?

The "resolution" is unquestionably wrong. Thus: a Mason either has the right to become non-affiliated, or he has not. If he has the right, then the "Resolution" is wrong, for none can contend that the Grand Lodge can punish a Mason for the exercise of a right which the Grand Lodge itself recognizes. If he has not the right, then the "Resolution" is equally wrong. To illustrate: The General Assembly enacts the law following, with this preamble: Whereas, the General Assembly has no authority to enact that a man shall not kill:

Therefore the General Assembly doth enact, that a man who kills, shall be hanged by the neck, until he is dead.

Why, the plainest mind can see, that the General Assembly substantially contradicts itself, by asserting its authority to punish for the commission of an act, which, it asserts, it has no authority to declare to be an offence—when, as we have seen, no punishment *can* be inflicted, ex-



cept for an offence, and an offence necessarily pre-supposes a violated law. So in the case in hand, the Grand Lodge asserts, impliedly at least, that it has no authority to forbid a Mason to become non-affiliated; and yet enacts, that, if he does, he shall forfeit, to all intents and purposes, his Masonic life. I most respectfully submit, that neither the laws, nor the regulations, nor the Constitution, of Masonry, tolerate any such palpable inconsistency, or contradiction, as that. Common sense cries out—"an ounce of preventive is worth a pound of cure."

The truth is, brethren, an innovation is here showing itself, pursuant to the wishes and designs of "backsliding" Masons, if you will allow the expression. Let us see.

Anderson's Constitutions—Art. 6, of the duty of members—declare "that no set or number of brethren shall withdraw, or separate themselves from the Lodge in which they were made, or were afterward admitted members, unless the Lodge become too numerous; nor even then, without a dispensation from the Grand Master, or Deputy; and when thus separated, they must either immediately join themselves to such other Lodges, that they shall like best, or else obtain the Grand Master's warrant to join in forming a new Lodge, to be regularly constituted in good time."

Dr. Mitchell, that most eminent masonic author, whose profound learning, unvarying accuracy, and discriminating judgment, have won the unbounded confidence and respect of this Grand Lodge, in his "Masonic History and Digest," Vol. 2, p. 437, says: "In modern times, a great and radical error has crept into our Lodges, and been so generally practiced, as to cause all the difficulties, now experienced on the subject of non-affiliated Masons. We allude to the custom of permitting members to dimit at will from their Lodges. The oldest regulation on the subject of which we have an account, permitted Masons to dimit but for two causes: first, in order to travel beyond the jurisdiction of the Lodge; and secondly, for the purpose of forming a new Lodge."

And again, Vol. 2, p. 603: "We have again and again stated \* \* that a brother Mason could only dimit or withdraw from his Lodge, for three reasons. First, when he was about to travel in foreign countries; second, when about to remove beyond the jurisdiction of his Lodge; and lastly, when his Lodge had become too numerous, and it became necessary to join in forming a new Lodge."

And again, same Vol., p. 604: "It follows, then, that the By-Laws



of Lodges, granting members the privilege of dimitting, when and for what cause, they please, are in direct violation of the paramount law of Masonry, and, therefore, a nullity. \* \* Once a Mason, always a Mason, and once a member, always a member, is the doctrine of the ancient law."

And again, same Vol. and p: " \* \* it will be seen that a brother can only dimit, with the distinct understanding, that he will speedily re-connect himself with another Lodge," &c.

These authorities establish three propositions:

1. Every Mason must be a member of a Lodge.
2. A Mason can dimit for three reasons only: 1st. When he is about to travel in foreign countries; 2nd. When about to remove beyond the jurisdiction of his Lodge; and 3rd, when his Lodge becomes too numerous, and it is necessary to join in forming a new Lodge.
3. When a Mason dimits for the above reasons, he does so *with the distinct understanding that he will speedily re-connect himself with another Lodge.*

Occupying then, brethren, the impregnable position here given to me, I earnestly recommend, that for all time to come, Subordinate Lodges be forbidden to grant a dimit, unless the application therefor, be based on, at least one of the reasons above enumerated. And seeing that all non-affiliated Masons have been permitted to withdraw from their Lodges, on the "distinct understanding," in legal contemplation, that they would speedily re-connect themselves with other Lodges. I also recommend, that they be allowed a limited time to carry out the understanding on their part, and if they do not, that they be expelled from all the rights and privileges of Masonry. And let the rule, brethren, have an universal, prospective operation. An innovation is a traitor in the camp, begetting traitors, and its expulsion is the first duty of him, who bears a faithful allegiance.

From the imperfect *data* at our command, we can only approximate the number of non-affiliated Masons in this jurisdiction. It may be reasonably estimated, however, that about 500 of these domestic foes, are continually shooting us in the back, from their skulking places, as we are struggling to move onward to the achievement of renewed victories. Brethren, my voice is for a short, sharp, decisive campaign against these troublesome deserters. Let us capture them, and compel them to renew their allegiance, or subject them to the penalty, which their treachery



so richly deserves—death, masonic death. Let us have no foes in the rear; no more expostulation; no more parleying; no more fruitless attempts to stop a morbid growth, by lopping off the branches; but let the axe be applied to the root of this baneful tree, that its poisonous influence may no longer be felt in our midst. Thus we shall free ourselves from many vexatious difficulties. All discontent, all insubordination, all dronishness will disappear, and we shall go forth to still nobler deeds, with the law vindicated, and our fame untarnished.

Masons, everywhere, have been persistent in their efforts, to preserve the exact phraseology of the Masonic Ritual: because, any change of words tends directly to produce a corresponding change of sense. The sense, without ambiguity, or incertitude, must be preserved; and the best way to preserve the sense, is always to use the same words in giving it expression. On the Ritual, depend to no inconsiderable extent, the laws and regulations, the usages and customs of the Fraternity. If the Ritual undergo any change, no matter how slight, that effects its construction and alters the sense, or leaves it in doubt, gross inconsistencies, great disorder, and probably, palpable absurdities will be the result.

I am well aware that no rule can be devised, and no means employed, to determine, with unerring certainty and exactness, the precise language that was used by the Fraternity, in olden times, to narrate certain events, or express certain ideas. We are dependent upon tradition, and tradition upon memory, and memory is defective. Yet, if an easy and natural construction of the Ritual of to-day, necessitates conclusions which are not at variance with any of the ancient characteristics of the Institution, we may congratulate ourselves, that the genius of masonry still presides among us, and sheds the same light upon her altars, which illumined the minds and hearts of our brethren, lo! these many centuries ago.

Masons will differ about the ritual, as men differ upon all other subjects. Masons will conclude that the work, which they first received, and which is inseparably connected with many early and precious associations, must be the work which King Solomon himself dispensed, when he presided over the craft, amid the gorgeous drapery of oriental splendor. All work must be brought to their touchstone, and its excellency must be proportionate to the similitude which it bears to their supposed relic of ancient days. No phraseology will do but theirs; and although the discordant sounds of grammatical blunders may sometimes grate harshly on the ear, yet the solemn protestation comes quickly to the res-



cue, that our ancient brethren understood not the art of speaking and writing the *English* language with propriety, and that *quaintness* is an indubitable sign of age. Hence we may readily perceive, that to give universal satisfaction, each Lodge would have to be licensed to dispense that work best suited to its peculiar notions and idiosyncrasies. Such a course it is needless to remark, would end in illimitable confusion. It only remains for the Grand Lodge, in its superior wisdom, to decide between these conflicting elements, and authoritatively declare what is the work. This it has wisely done. And although objections, founded probably on mere prejudices and predilections, may be strenuously urged against the action of the Grand Lodge; yet, it is humbly conceived that the phraseology of the work, at present dispensed, is free from any serious defect, while the "kernel" is in a perfectly sound and healthy condition. The work teaches what it should teach as to principle and doctrine, while its historical narratives and traditions give no uncertain sound, and lead to no uncertain conclusion. I recommend, therefore, that no change shall now be made; and that the Grand Lodge shall give to the Subordinate Lodges the unqualified assurance, that no change shall hereafter be made. The frequent changes, which have heretofore been made, have been invariably succeeded by injurious consequences. They have discouraged the Fraternity from acquiring the work, because they were justified in the apprehension, that, sooner or later, a change would be promulgated, and all their labor and application, thus expended, be rendered fruitless and unavailing. *What we most need is a changeless work.* This is absolutely indispensable to its thorough dissemination; and its thorough dissemination must necessarily precede a general intelligent reception of the sublime moral truths of the Institution, and a correct apprehension of its usages and customs, its maxims and laws.

Permit me, then, to urge upon you, the vital importance of devising the cheapest and the most expeditious plan for thoroughly instructing the Lodges throughout the entire jurisdiction—taking care in perfecting your plan to make it obligatory upon them, to yield to it a prompt and universal obedience. Not until this is done, and the Lodges be made proficient in the Masonic Ritual, can we reasonably hope to witness any gratifying amount of zeal manifested in acquiring valuable masonic information, or in exemplifying those great moral truths, which masonry aims to impress on the minds and hearts of all, who kneel at her shrine.

Early in my official term, I convened the Lecturers in the city of New-



berne, when the work was reviewed, and the differences existing between the Lecturers were, I trust, properly reconciled, after careful consideration, and a full interchange of opinions and recollections.

It was deemed advisable, the better to accomplish the purpose we had in view, to divide the State into Districts, and assign a Lecturer to each District. A central point, in each District, was then selected, where each Lodge, in that District, instead of pursuing the usual plan, might, if preferred, meet the Lecturer, through representatives appointed for the purpose, and obtain requisite instruction, at greatly reduced prices. In pursuance of this plan, the Lecturers went forth to the discharge of their duty, with authority from me to address the various Lodges, informing them of the plan, and that they were expected and required to obtain the work before the end of the masonic year. The success which crowned our efforts is truly gratifying; and it is believed, an unusual amount of instruction has been imparted during the year. I beg leave, however, for more detailed information, to refer to the reports of the Lecturers, whom I take occasion to commend for the intelligence and fidelity with which they have discharged the duties of their station.

I will also state, that, being convinced that some of the Lecturers discarded the work of the Grand Lodge, as a gross innovation, I took occasion, directly after the close of the meeting of Lecturers referred to, to address a letter to each Lecturer, in which I stated, that if he was not proficient in the work, and did not intend shortly to become so, he would return his commission to my office; whereupon, one returned his commission, and another announced his resignation of his office.

The Lecturers, who were appointed and retained their commissions, are, R. W. Best, S. H. Rountree, H. S. Lee, W. L. Love, W. P. Williams, B. Walker, B. W. Hatcher.

For the purpose of stimulating effort to acquire the work, and to provoke a generous emulation among the Subordinate Lodges, I appointed, upon the certificate of a District Lecturer, a number of brethren Lecturers for their respective Lodges.

On suitable recommendation, our distinguished brother, E. E. Thorne, was appointed our Representative near the Grand Lodge of N. Y.

My official intercourse with the various Lodges, throughout the State, constrains me to press upon the Grand Lodge, the importance of concisely, yet comprehensively, defining the power and authority of the Grand



Master, in his relation to the Craft generally throughout his jurisdiction. The idea prevails, practically at least, to a very great extent, that each Subordinate Lodge is a sort of little independent sovereignty within itself, and that the Grand Master is nothing but a general advisory officer, or a specially authorized agent to grant dispensations, upon certain conditions, and in certain emergencies—or, at best, a kind of umpire, to decide controverted points of jurisprudence, arising between contending parties. The consequence is, that the Grand Master is constantly thwarted in his efforts to enforce, as it is his duty to do, the laws and resolutions of the Grand Lodge, and in his endeavors to obtain such information of the condition of the Lodges, as will materially aid in legislating for their better government, and more enlarged usefulness. The truth is, his orders are obeyed or not, as may be considered best by the Lodges themselves.

It is respectfully submitted, that even a hasty review of his unlimited power before, as well as of his comparatively restricted power since, the establishment of Grand Lodges will render it an easy task, to place the Grand Master before the Fraternity in his *true* position, so that his usefulness may not be crippled, or his authority set at defiance. And especially is it of the first importance to declare to what extent the edicts of the Grand Master are to be obeyed, until reversed by the decision of the Grand Lodge. It may be said that the Grand Master should, by the exercise of his own prerogative, enforce obedience to his own behests. That might do very well under ordinary circumstances; but when a *majority* of the Lodges in the jurisdiction fail to give even a passing notice to the requisitions of the Grand Master, it is confidently submitted, that such a course on his part would be, for reasons too apparent to mention, both impolitic and unwise, and that the Grand Lodge should end all controversy, as far as possible, by a declaration of its undisputed authority.

As an index to the general condition of the craft throughout the jurisdiction, I invite your attention to the tabular statement which I have placed upon the table of your Secretary, made up from reports received from one hundred and three Lodges, and showing to what extent profanity and drunkenness, evil speaking and backbiting, prevail, how much is received for charitable uses, how the discipline of the Lodges is enforced, how proficient the Lodges are in the work, &c., &c., all of which, I hope, will be used by you in furtherance of the purposes for which the Grand Lodge meets in annual communication.



It is to be regretted that so much of the funds of the Lodges is expended in the adornment and construction of Halls. Masonry is *par excellence*, a Charitable Institution. Masonry had rather dwell in an humble cot, and partake of its rude shelter and accommodations, with the latch string hanging on the outside of the door, inviting the welcome entrance of the poor distressed brother, his widow and orphans, than be locked up in some stately edifice whose marble exterior bespeaks the chilling selfishness of the occupants within. Let us caution the Lodges against a too lavish expenditure of their funds for the own comfort and convenience, or for purposes of useless display.

And now, brethren, I have discharged my duty—feebly and imperfectly it is true, yet with an earnest desire to advance your interests, and promote the growth of our Institution. We are, indeed, members of a noble Institution. Let us cherish it—let us venerate it—let us be zealous in our attachment to its benign principles. I have not chosen to eulogize Masonry's exalted character, nor to recount the many, many noble deeds of real beneficence, which have ever marked her glorious pathway. I feel, in common with you, that with her brilliant history of centuries upon centuries, it is enough to point to her and exclaim, there she is, she can speak for herself!

In announcing my determination not to be considered an applicant for your renewed confidence and partiality, permit me to bid you an affectionate adieu. May our meeting together in friendly and fraternal intercourse, after another year has been numbered with the past, redound to our individual benefit, and the glory of our Institution! May we exemplify the masonic virtues in our daily walk and conversation! May we be true and faithful, and live and act agreeably to our profession! May we, through the exercise of a living faith, an inspiring hope, and a fervent charity, be at last translated from the imperfect Lodge below, to that all-perfect, glorious, and celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides! And, finally, brethren, may the blessings of Heaven rest upon us, and all regular Masons, may brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us. Amen.











